



LAKE CASCADE

N E W S B R I E F

March 2001

BUREAU OF
RECLAMATION

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of this Newsbrief is to provide the public an additional period of two weeks to provide us with any comments on a potential change to the Preferred Alternative as an outcome of comments received on the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Potential Change to the Preferred Alternative

Reclamation's Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Lake Cascade RMP was released for public review on December 20, 2001. The public was afforded 60 days to review and provide comments on the Draft EA. During this time period, Newsbrief No. 6 was published which summarized the differences between the alternatives and explained how the public could get a copy of the document, as well as described the process for submitting comments back to Reclamation. Reclamation's web site was also updated providing both the above information and an on-line method by which the public could submit comments on the Draft EA. About half way through the public review and comment period, Reclamation held a set of two public hearings (one in Boise and the other in Cascade) to solicit public testimony on the Draft EA. At these hearings, attendees had the choice of either providing their comments verbally via formal testimony recorded by a court reporter and/or by filling out a comment form provided upon entry to the hearing.

We received a total of approximately 250 comment letters, forms, and web site responses and heard from 37 people through public (verbal) testimony at the two hearings. By far, the largest number of comments (approximately 150) came from proponents advocating that

the State airstrip adjacent to Lake Cascade be re-opened as part of the Preferred Alternative, as was originally proposed in the 1991 RMP.

The 1991 RMP proposed re-opening the airstrip for recreational fly-in use, and efforts were made to accomplish it. Before the airstrip can be re-opened, however, a land transaction is required between Reclamation and the private agricultural easement holder of this parcel. This transaction has not been successful to date; therefore, the airstrip never re-opened. Because proponents of the airstrip had not expressed their views earlier in the RMP update process and due to the seemingly difficult effort regarding the land transaction, as well as the re-occupation of a nearby nest by a pair of bald eagles, it was decided not to include re-opening the airstrip as part of the Preferred Alternative in the Draft EA. Instead, the Preferred Alternative called for the airstrip and adjoining area to be reclassified as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) land use designation and be added to the Duck Creek WMA.

Reclamation is considering modifying the Preferred Alternative to potentially allow the State airstrip to be re-opened for recreational fly-in use as well as boat and hike-in use. If the modified scenario is adopted, the area would be developed for fly-in and boat-in camping and day use (e.g., picnicking, swimming) activities. However, this would only be allowed provided several conditions were

met. Following are the conditions that would be required to permit this re-designation to occur and fly-in use to be reinstated:

1. Conduct monitoring of the nearby bald eagle nest and its occupants, as well as other potentially affected bald eagles in the Hot Springs WMA and Lake Cascade area according to a future monitoring plan agreed to by Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Monitoring would need to clearly demonstrate that reinstating this use would not have a negative impact on the area's bald eagle population. If the airstrip is re-opened, it is anticipated it would be a provisional opening based on monitoring of eagle interactions.
2. The land transaction would need to be consummated enabling Reclamation free and clear title without any restrictions over this parcel of land.
3. The Idaho Aviation Association would need to comply with all requirements set forth in a permit issued to them by Reclamation. These include: (a) taking on the liability associated with the use of this area; (b) developing, operating, and maintaining the area according to Reclamation stipulations as set forth in the permit, including assuming the costs of these requirements; (c) providing for a hook up to the Donnelly city sewer system enabling flush toilets

to be provided without the need for a septic system; (d) adhering to any flight line or time of day restrictions that may be imposed as part of the permit; and (e) issuing a bond adequate to cover reclamation of the site.

In the Preferred Alternative of the Final EA the area would continue to be designated and managed as a WMA. When/if all of the above conditions are met, then a separate Environmental Assess-

ment would be conducted on the re-opening of the airstrip. The area would be re-opened and redesignated as Recreation, and an amendment made to the RMP, assuming the outcome of the EA shows that there would be no significant impacts.

Tell Us What You Think About this Potential Change

This concept was not part of the Preferred Alternative as presented in the

Draft EA. Therefore, we feel it is imperative to seek input on this potential change to the Preferred Alternative. Accordingly, we have extended the comment period until March 28, 2001 to provide you the opportunity to consider this potential change and provide us comments. We do, however, ask that you limit your comments to this issue only, as ample time has already been provided to consider the other aspects of the Draft EA during the previous review and comment period.

How to Comment

As previously indicated, we received numerous comments on this issue. Please respond only if you have additional comments, beyond what was submitted under the original 60 day comment period. Please send us your comments on this issue by one of the following methods:

Via mail to:

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
PN Regional Office
Attn: Carolyn Burpee Stone
1150 North Curtis, Suite 100
Boise, Idaho 83706-1234

By fax to:

Carolyn Burpee Stone
(208) 378-5305

By using the comment form on Reclamation's web site at:

www.pn.usbr.gov

We must receive your comments regarding this potential change by March 28th for them to be included in the Final EA. Also, along with your comments, you must include your name and full address (street, city, state, and zip code).

You can request that we withhold your name and/or address by stating this prominently at the beginning of your written comments. However, we will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure in their entirety.

Your comments are very important as they will assist us in conducting our final assessment of whether or not to make this potential change to the Preferred Alternative.



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